



A SELLER'S GUIDE

How to Winterize Your Home

On the Gulf Coast a hard freeze is rare — but when one hits, an unprepared home pays for it. Here's how to get ready early and avoid costly, weather-related surprises.

Prepared for homeowners across the greater Houston area



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Educational guide — current as of 2026. Winterizing needs vary by home, age, and exposure; this is general guidance, not professional inspection, plumbing, or HVAC advice. For furnace, gas, chimney, and plumbing work, use a licensed professional. If your home is currently listed with a REALTOR® or broker, please disregard any solicitation — this is shared for education, not to interfere with an existing agreement. Equal Housing Opportunity.

START HERE

Get ready before the cold arrives — not after.



It's easy to put off preparing your home for winter until the cold has already set in. The trouble is, by then it may be too late to prevent the damage. Winterizing early keeps you warm and protects your home from the kind of weather-related mishaps that turn into expensive repairs.

Here on the Gulf Coast, our winters are mostly mild — but the occasional hard freeze is exactly what catches homeowners off guard. A single night below freezing can burst an unprotected pipe and cause real damage, as many Texans have learned the hard way.

This guide walks through the essentials: protecting your pipes, prepping your heating system, sealing out the cold, and shielding your plants. Most of these are simple weekend tasks; a few are best handed to a pro. A little effort now buys a lot of peace of mind.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 1 Protecting your pipes
- 2 Preparing your heating system
- 3 Sealing out the cold
- 4 Protecting your plants
- 5 Your winter-ready plan

SECTION 1

Protecting your pipes

Keeping pipes from freezing is the single most important winter task. When temperatures drop below freezing and a pipe isn't protected, it can burst — and a burst pipe means water damage, not just an inconvenience. A few simple steps prevent it.

Keep pipes from freezing



Insulate exposed pipes

Wrap pipes in vulnerable spots with foam insulation sleeves — especially those along exterior walls, in the attic, or in an unheated garage.



Seal the cold air out

Find and seal any leaks or gaps around water pipes where cold air can reach them. Less cold air means less risk of a freeze.



Handle the outdoor faucets

Disconnect garden hoses, and where you can, shut off the water valves serving outdoor faucets so no water sits and freezes in the line.



Let a faucet drip in a freeze

On the coldest nights, let warm water drip slowly from a faucet. Moving water is far less likely to freeze inside the pipe.

HOUSTON-AREA NOTE

Know where your main water shutoff is before you ever need it. If a pipe does burst, shutting off the water in seconds — instead of hunting for the valve — is the difference between a mop-up and a major claim.

SECTION 2

Preparing your heating system

No one wants to wake up freezing to a furnace that won't start. Because heating systems sit idle for most of our year, it's worth a quick check before the first cold night so they're ready when you need them.

1

Replace the filters

Swap in fresh air filters before you fire up the system. Clean filters help it run efficiently and keep the air in your home cleaner.

2

Clear and clean the unit

Wipe down the furnace and remove any debris or stored items within about two feet of it. Give it room to operate safely.

3

Tend the chimney and fireplace

If you use a fireplace, have the chimney cleaned — yourself or, better, by a professional — before the first fire of the season.

4

Check alarms and book an inspection

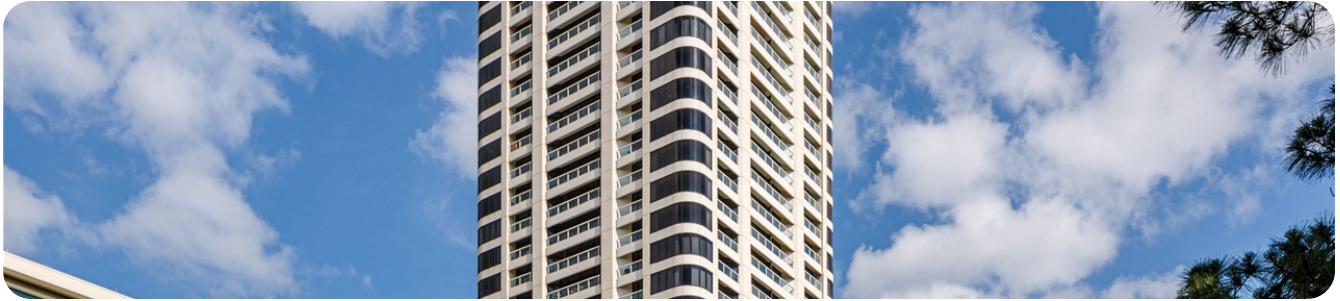
Confirm every smoke and carbon-monoxide alarm is working, then schedule a professional furnace inspection for safe, reliable heat all winter.

SAFETY FIRST

Carbon monoxide is odorless and dangerous, and it's a real risk anytime gas heat runs. Working CO detectors and a yearly pro inspection aren't optional — they protect your family and your home.

SECTION 3

Sealing out the cold



Check doors and weatherstripping

Make sure every exterior door and window is properly sealed. Each exterior door should have weatherstripping along the bottom — and after a few years it wears out, so inspect and replace damaged strips.

Caulk the gaps

Fill any cracks you find around windows and doors with caulk. These small openings are a surprisingly large source of cold drafts.

Add insulating curtains

If certain spots still feel cold, insulating curtains help hold warm air in and keep cold air out — an easy, renter-friendly fix.

Find the cold spots

Walk the home on a chilly day and notice where it feels drafty. Those rooms point you straight to the gaps worth sealing first.

A BONUS THAT LASTS

Sealing drafts doesn't only help in winter — the same weatherstripping and caulk keep our brutal summer heat out and your A/C from working overtime. It's a small project that pays you back all year.

SECTION 4

Protecting your plants

Many of us love to garden through our long warm season, but some plants simply can't handle a cold snap on their own. When temperatures drop, a little protection keeps your favorites alive to bloom again.

Shield your garden from the cold



Bring the tender ones in

Move potted and tropical plants indoors before a freeze. They're the most vulnerable and the easiest to save.



Mulch and cover

Add an extra layer of mulch to insulate roots, and cover plants at night — especially tropicals — during the stretch between the first and last frost.



Water wisely

Water at least once a month, ideally just before the sunniest part of the day, so plants aren't sitting in cold, wet soil overnight.



Know your plants

Some species need more protection than others, so do a little research. For avid gardeners, a small greenhouse is the surest way to keep tender plants through a cold spell.

OUR FROST WINDOW

Houston-area frost dates fall in a fairly narrow winter window, so you rarely protect plants for long. Watch the forecast — most years it's just a handful of nights that call for covering up.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Your winter-ready plan

Protecting your home through winter helps you avoid unnecessary, expensive repairs. Here's how to stay ahead of the cold.

1

Prepare early.

Do the work before the first cold night, not after. Once a freeze arrives, prevention is off the table.

2

Pipes come first.

Insulate, seal, disconnect hoses, and know your shutoff. A burst pipe is the costliest winter surprise — and the most preventable.

3

Make heat safe and ready.

Fresh filters, a clear unit, working CO alarms, and a pro inspection mean reliable, safe warmth all season.

4

Seal the drafts.

Weatherstrip, caulk, and curtain the cold spots. You'll be warmer in winter and cooler come summer.

5

Watch the forecast.

Our freezes are few. A little attention on the nights that matter protects your pipes and your plants both.

LET'S TALK

Work with Allen



Thinking about listing your home around the colder months? Don't worry — a well-winterized home stays safe even while it's vacant and on the market. And if you're weighing a winter sale, it helps to talk with someone who knows year-round home care and our local market.

Considering a sale this winter? Let's plan it right.

I'll help you keep your home safe and show-ready through the cold months, point out the prep that matters most before you list, and share a free, current picture of what your home could sell for today. No pressure, no obligation. When would be a good time to connect?

Reach out for a free home-value and prep consultation

Call or text: (832) 709-2540 · allen@allenmarkel.com · allenmarkel.com

If waiting for spring is the smarter move for your home, I'll tell you honestly. My goal is to help you make the right call — and to sell for the most the market will support. TREC #0658294.